

Message Text

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46

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 PC-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV KS

SUBJECT: ROK DOMESTIC REACTION TO CABINET CHANGES

SUMMARY: ROK CABINET REORGANIZATION HAS BEEN GREETED WITH ENTHUSIASM BY THE ROKG'S SUPPORTERS AND WITH SKEPTICISM BY ITS CRITICS. DRP AND YUCHONGHOE HAVE LAUDED THE CHANGES. GENERAL PRESS OPINION SEEMS TO BE THAT CHANGE MAY BE TOO LITTLE, BUT PERHAPS NOT TOO LATE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO SALVAGE SOMETHING OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE. PRESS APPEARS DISPOSED TO GIVE THE NEW CABINET A CHANCE, WHILE CRITICIZING PAST AND PRESENT GOVERNMENT POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

1. NDP SPOKESMAN CHAE MUN-SIK WAS QUOTED DEC 3 AS SAYING HIS PARTY WAS HAPPY TO SEE THE CABINET CHANGE, WHICH WAS IN LINE WITH NDP RECOMMENDATION THAT CABINET RESIGN EN BLOC. HOWEVER, HE CONSIDERED THE CHANGE CAME TOO LATE IN VIEW OF THE DOMESTIC SITUATION WHICH HAS DEVELOPED, AND
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HE DOUBTED THAT THERE WAS ENOUGH OF A CHANGE TO

ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO REMEDY THE SITUATION.

2. ROK PRESS, AFTER REPORTING FACTS OF THE REORGANIZATION IN P.M. PAPERS DECEMBER 3, DEVOTED DECEMBER 4 TO WIDE-RANGING AND SURPRISINGLY CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT POLICY AND THE RESHUFFLE. ALL PAPERS WELCOMED THE CHANGE, MOST NOTING THAT IT WAS NOT COMPLETE BUT LEFT THE CABINET FILLED WITH FAMILIAR FACES WHO HAD SERVED IN THE PARK GOVERNMENT BEFORE. HOPE WAS NONETHELESS EXPRESSED THAT THE CHANGE OF ITSELF WOULD ENCOURAGE A MORE FLEXIBLE ROKG APPROACH TO DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, AS EVEN OLD FACES COULD CHANGE THEIR MINDS (CHOSUN ILBO).

3. PRESS COMMENTS ON REASONS FOR THE CHANGE WERE DIRECT AND INCISIVE. TONGA ILBO SAID THE ROKG THEREBY ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOR KIM TAE CHUNG AFFAIR. CHOSUN ILBO WENT FURTHER AND COMMENTED THAT REPLACEMENT OF YI HU-RAK PROVED THAT RUMORS CIRCULATING ABOUT HIM WERE TRUE. CHUNGANG ILBO. NOTING THAT YI HO HAD BEEN RELIEVED BECAUSE OF KIM TAE CHUNG INCIDENT, YI HU-RAK BECAUSE OF IMPASSE IN SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE, AND LEE NAK-SUN BECAUSE OF OIL CRISIS, ASKED POINTEDLY WHY MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND INFORMATION HAD NOT ALSO BEEN SACKED, A QUESTION REPEATED BY OTHER PAPERS. IMPACT OF STUDENT UNREST WAS ACKNOWLEDGED BY MOST OF PRESS.

4. DISSATISFACTION WITH ROKG INFORMATION POLICY WAS EXPRESSED IN MANY PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE CABINET REORGANIZATION. TONGA ILBO COMMENTED EDITORIALY THAT PUBLIC OPINION MUST BE DEVELOPED IN A FORM BEFITTING A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY AND REMINDED ROKG THAT A DEMOCRATIC ENVIRONMENT CANNOT FLOURISH IF OPINION IS CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT. IT URGED THE ROKG TO RENOVATE ITS DOMESTIC POLICY AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE OLD IMAGE OF THE CIA WOULD BE CHANGED.

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5. MANY PAPERS CALLED FOR ROKG TO GOVERN MORE RESPONSIVELY IN FUTURE. HANKUK ILBO STATED THAT TO BE EFFECTIVE, THE NEW CABINET MUST KNOW WHAT THE PEOPLE DESIRE, AND THIS KNOWLEDGE CAN ONLY BE GAINED IF THERE IS FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

6. COMMENT: EDITORIAL CRITICISM OF ROKG, WHILE

PHRASED IN RESTRAINED LANGUAGE, IS SIGNIFICANT IN ITS
INCLUSION OF EXISTING ROKG POLICIES AND MINISTERS
STILL IN OFFICE, AS WELL AS OF POLICIES AND PERSONNEL
ABANDONED BY THE CABINET CHANGE. THIS IS MOST DIRECT
CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT PERMITTED SINCE OCTOBER
REVITALIZATION.

7. SEPTTEL CONTAINS OTHER PRESS DEVELOPMENTS.
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